

**Registered Nurses Association  
of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut  
Practice and Prescriptive Guidelines for Nurse Practitioners**



## Introduction

A Nurse practitioner (NP) is a registered nurse with additional educational preparation and experience. Only nurses who are licensed with the Registered Nurses Association of the Northwest Territories and Nunavut (RNANTNU) to practice as a NP can use the designation "Nurse Practitioner" in the NWT and Nunavut. NPs practice in a variety of settings including community, acute care, and long-term care. In accordance with the Nursing Profession Act S.N.W.T. 2003, c.15 (as amended) and the Nursing Profession Act, S.Nu 2003, c. 17 a Nurse Practitioner in the NWT and Nunavut has the legislated authority to:

- a. Make a diagnosis identifying a disease, disorder or condition;
- b. Communicate a diagnosis to a patient
- c. Order and interpret screening and diagnostic tests authorized in guidelines approved by the Minister;
- d. Select, recommend, supply, prescribe and monitor the effectiveness of drugs authorized in guidelines approved by the Minister; and
- e. Perform other procedures that are authorized in guidelines approved by the Minister

This document identifies the diagnostic tests, procedures, drugs, and other treatments that nurse practitioners are authorized to perform and/or order. These Guidelines, approved by the Minister of Health and Social Services, Government of the Northwest Territories and the Minister of Health, Government of Nunavut provide the necessary authority for nurse practitioners, as defined in section 1 (Definitions) of the Nursing Profession Acts, to prescribe those drugs included in Schedule F of the Food and Drugs Act and/or Schedule I of the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA) and controlled substances as per the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act (Canada) as amended from time to time.

This is not a stand-alone document and should be used as a companion with other documents including but not limited to the Nursing Profession Acts, the Standards of Practice for Registered Nurses and Nurse Practitioners and the Canadian Nurse Practitioner Core Competency Framework.



Approved by:

Minister of Health & Social Services

Northwest Territories

Sept 24/14  
Date



Approved by:

Minister of Health

Nunavut

June 9th, 2014  
Date

Note: Signature of the Minister validates these guidelines in the jurisdiction for which that Minister is responsible.

April 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2014

## **Diagnostic and Imaging Tests**

A Nurse Practitioner is authorized to order the following diagnostic imaging tests:

- X-rays
- Ultrasounds
- Scans:
  - Bone density;
  - Mammography;
  - Other scans required for a patient's health condition or injury

## **Laboratory and Other Non-Laboratory Tests**

A Nurse Practitioner is authorized to order and interpret the laboratory and other non-laboratory tests including, but not limited to:

### Laboratory Tests

- Microbiology
- Immunology
- Cytology/pathology
- Hematology
- Biochemistry
- Virology
- Genetic testing

### Other

- Additional tests required by the patient population including, but not limited to:
  - Pulmonary function tests
  - Holter monitoring
  - ECG
  - Sleep apnea testing

## Procedures

As part of their practice, nurse practitioners have the authority to perform both non-invasive and invasive procedures for which competence has been developed and maintained. A nurse practitioner performs procedures in the following areas:

- Suturing
- Irrigation
- Incision and drainage
- Excisions
- Insertions
- Joint reductions (shoulder, digits)
- Limb immobilization including casting
- Other additional procedures required by the patient population (e.g. joint injections)

## Prescriptive Authority

Based on their patient population and as part of their practice, nurse practitioners have the authority to prescribe drugs listed in Schedule F of the Food and Drugs Act (Canada) and /or drugs listed in Schedule I of the National Association of Pharmacy Regulatory Authorities (NAPRA) National Drug Schedules ([www.napra.ca/pages/Schedules/Search.aspx](http://www.napra.ca/pages/Schedules/Search.aspx)) and controlled substances as per the Controlled Drugs and Substances Act ([CDSA], Canada) and applicable regulations. Non-prescription drugs can be obtained without a prescription; however NPs can write a prescription for such drugs, if required (NAPRA Schedule II and III). This also includes various devices (e.g. colostomy equipment).

A Nurse Practitioner is authorized to prescribe vaccines as outlined in the Canadian Immunization Guide as revised from time to time. A Nurse Practitioner is also authorized to prescribe treatments such as massage therapy, acupuncture, etc.

When prescribing drugs, NPs assess the patient's need, consider the risks and benefits of drug therapy for each patient; are aware of the evidence on outcomes and cost effectiveness; provide patients with relevant information and counseling on drug therapies including cost effective alternative choices; and monitor and document a patient's response to drug therapy. Nurse practitioners collaborate and consult with a physician or pharmacist as appropriate.

The *New Classes of Practitioners Regulations* (under the CDSA) have been revised to identify the NP as a "practitioner" who is eligible to prescribe controlled substances with limited exceptions.

## References

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